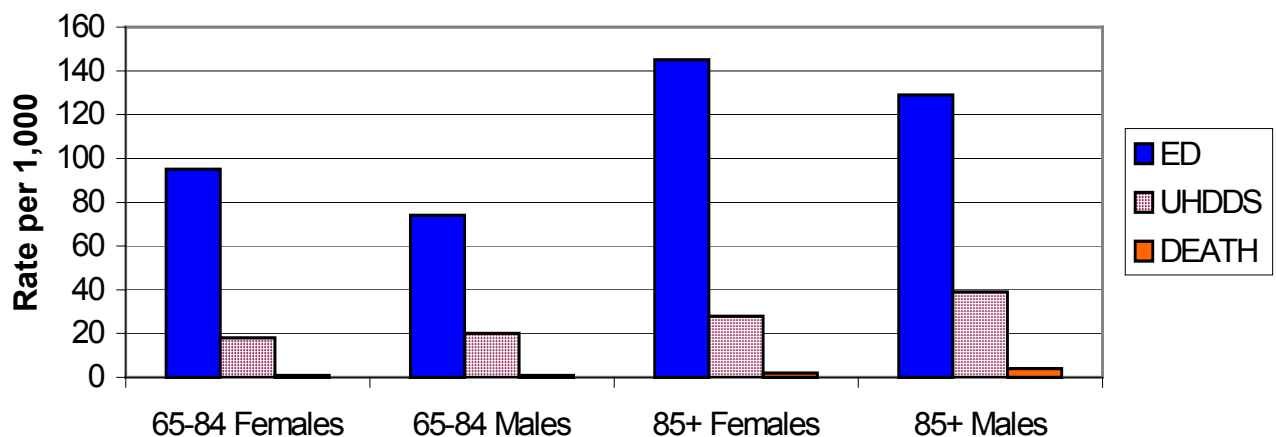


## **Injuries Among Massachusetts Residents** **Age 65 and Over**

### OVERVIEW:

- The elderly are at disproportionately high risk for injury-related hospitalizations and fatalities. They represent 15% (942,684) of the total Massachusetts population, yet 45% (17,194) of all injury-related hospitalizations and 31% (739) of all injury-related fatalities.<sup>1,2,3,4</sup>
- For every injury-related death over age 64, there are 23 injury-related hospitalizations, and 102 emergency department visits (ED).<sup>1,2,3</sup>
- Elderly residents age 85 and over have an almost 2 times greater risk of being injured than those age 65 to 84.

### **Rate of Injury-Related Emergency Department Visits, Hospitalizations and Deaths Among Massachusetts Residents Age 65 and Older, 1998**



Sources: Injury Surveillance Program, MDPH, 1999. Massachusetts Hospital Discharge Data Set (UHDDS), MA Health Care Finance and Policy, 1998. MA Registry of Vital Records, MDPH, 1998. Massachusetts Institute for Social and Economic Research, MA 1997 Population Data.

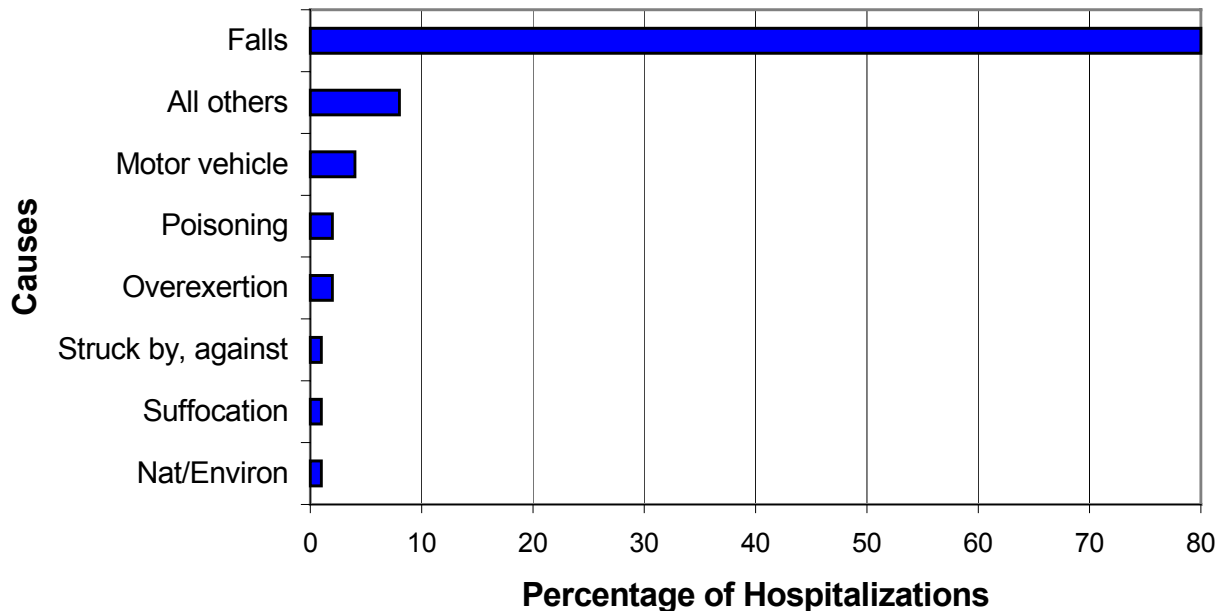
Massachusetts Department of Public Health

Bureau of Family and Community Health ♦ Injury Prevention and Control Program

250 Washington Street, Fourth Floor ♦ Boston, MA 02108 ♦ 617.624.5070 ♦ [www.state.ma.us/dph/unin/inj.htm](http://www.state.ma.us/dph/unin/inj.htm)  
Summer 2001

## UNINTENTIONAL INJURIES:

### **Unintentional Injury-Related Hospitalizations Among Massachusetts Residents Age 65 and Older, 1998**



Source: Massachusetts Hospital Discharge Data Set, MA Health Care Finance and Policy, 1998.  
All others includes, unspecified, fire/burn, other specified and classifiable, cut/pierce, machinery, etc.

- The majority of fatal and non-fatal injuries among Massachusetts residents age 65 and over are unintentional: 99% or 74,397 of injury-related emergency department visits, 99% or 16,986 hospitalizations, and 87% or 639 deaths.
- Falls are the number one cause of unintentional injury-related emergency department visits (42,316), hospitalizations (13,759), and deaths (136), for both genders over 64.<sup>1, 2, 3</sup>
- Motor vehicle crashes are the second leading cause of unintentional injury emergency department visits (5,925), hospitalizations (766), and deaths (120), for both genders.<sup>1, 2, 3</sup>

## INTENTIONAL INJURY:

- There were 358 intentional injury-related visits to the emergency department; 160 intentional injury-related hospitalizations; and 96 intentional injury-related fatalities among residents age 65 and over. These numbers include both self-inflicted and assault-related injuries.<sup>1, 2, 3</sup>
- The leading type of intentional injury-related hospitalization and death for Massachusetts residents age 65 and over were attempted suicide (114) and suicide (88), respectively.<sup>1,2</sup> Almost 79% of the 114 attempts were by poisoning.<sup>1</sup> More women were hospitalized for attempted suicide than men, 73 to 41 respectively.<sup>1</sup>
- 17% (72) of the injury-related deaths among elders 65-84 are suicide; 5% (16) for residents age 85 and over. More men complete suicide than women, 65 to 23 respectively.<sup>2</sup>
- The other type of intentional injury is assault. There were 265 assault-related emergency department visits, 46 hospitalizations, and 8 assault deaths for people over the age of 64 in 1998.<sup>1,2,3</sup>

## Fall Prevention Tips

- Take your time. Get out of bed, out of a chair or car slowly. Stand and get your balance before walking.
- Best foot forward. Wear sturdy, well-fitted, low-heeled shoes with non-slip soles. These are safer than high-heels, thick-soled athletic shoes or sneaker, slippers or stocking feet.
- Throw rugs can throw you. If you must use throw rugs, use only throw rugs with rubber, non-skid backing.

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION AND RESOURCES:

Massachusetts Department of Public Health -- Unintentional Injury Prevention and Control Program. Web site location <http://www.state.ma.us/dph/uninj/inj.htm> for information on injury prevention, injury data and links to other injury prevention sites. Phone: 617-624-5070. TTY: 617-624-5992

Massachusetts Department of Public Health -- Office of Elder Health. Web site location <http://www.state.ma.us/dph/ehp.htm> for information on elder health and associated resources. Phone: 617-624-5600. TTY: 617-624-5992

Massachusetts Department of Public Health -- Injury Surveillance Program Web site location <http://www.state.ma.us/dph/bhsre/bhsre.htm> for information on injury data. Phone: 617-624-5600

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention -- National Center for Injury Prevention and Control [www.cdc.gov/ncipc/ncipchm.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/ncipc/ncipchm.htm) This site has fact sheets on intentional and unintentional injury, publications and access to injury statistics. Phone: 770-488-1506

National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) -- [www.nfpa.org](http://www.nfpa.org) This site provides information on burn and fire prevention, safety tips, and produced the "Remembering When: a fire and fall prevention program for older adults". The fall prevention tips in this fact sheet are from this curriculum. Phone: 800-344-3555

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<sup>1</sup> Massachusetts Hospital Discharge Data Set, MA Division of Health Care Finance and Policy, 1998.

<sup>2</sup> Massachusetts Registry of Vital Records, MA Department of Public Health, 1998.

<sup>3</sup> Injury Surveillance Program, MA Department of Public Health, 1999.

Numbers are based on a sample of 13 hospitals and then an estimate is projected. All emergency department data is for fiscal year 1999.

<sup>4</sup> The addition of unintentional and intentional injury do not equal the total number of injuries due to the small number of other and undetermined which are not included in this report.